

What is Poetic Image?

Serkan Engin

Poetry is written by poetic images, not by individual words according to the imagist socialist poetry, but what is poetic image and how can it be created?

The description of the “image” according to the philosophy is as “The reflection of the objective reality on human mind” (*Philosophy Dictionary by Orhan Hancerlioglu*). In other words, we can say “night image” in philosophical meaning, but the word “night” can’t be an image lonely in Poetry, because the image in Poetry, in other words, “poetic image” has a different meaning. When we say “night”, similar associations occur in everyone, but we establish the “poetic image” by “night + x” words, in other words, by a combination occurred by “at least two words” and being used for the first time. That is the “image” in Poetry which we mentioned.

Let’s take an ordinary word in the natural language, in other words, a word which is used collectively by everyone who speaks the same language, for example, “tree”. The word “tree” which is a concrete word is “sign” according to the linguistic which is a sub-branch of the semantics. The humans think by concepts and use these signs to express their thoughts. The objects, cases, facts and acts signalized by these signs in reality are called as “referents”. A sign must signalize the same referent for other humans to form the communication which is the main function of the language. In other words, the impression/ image which is occurred on the minds of every person who receipts the

word as written or audial is the sum total of the main properties of the sign. For example, when we take a concrete word as “tree” and write or say “tree”, a zeppelin image or an elevator image doesn’t occur on any of the minds of the readers/ hearers. Likewise, when we take an abstract word “night”, we reach to the same result. When we write or say “night”, the sum total of collective projections occurs on the minds of all reader/ hearer persons. In other words, when we write or say “night”, collective projections about various abstract concepts and concrete objects like death, silence, entertainment, street lamp, sleep, bar stool, burglar, loneliness, bed, sex etc. But no projection about an abstract concept like “bribery” or a concrete object like “arrow” occurs on the mind of anyone who reads or hears the “night” word.

The “image” mentioned above is not the “poetic image” that we will discuss about, because the signs (words) which is used collectively in the natural language form the “same” sum of the collective “images”.

Poetic image is established by correlating two words (signs) having far semantic relation between themselves with an analogic relation, so when the receptor persons receipt the poetic image as written or audial, one or more referent according to their “subjective perceptions” occur differently on the minds of every receptor persons. This referent does not fit snugly into the immanently target of the “creation” which occurs on the mind of the poet who is the act subject of the poetic image in terms of conceptional and

imaginational. So, no same and fix projection is occurred at every persons.

Let's give an example. We have two words, as "night", an abstract noun word and "shirt", a concrete noun word.

We will establish a "poetic image" by correlating these two words with an analogic relation. That will be an abstract-concrete combination, but we can also create a poetic image by concrete-concrete, concrete-abstract, abstract-abstract, abstract-concrete combinations between "at least two words" by correlating them with an analogic relation.

Schematically:

night.....
.....natural word

$x + \text{night} = \text{the shirt of the night}$poetic image
established by correlation of two words having far semantic relation with an analogic relation.

$x + \text{night} + y = \text{the shirt of the night was torn}$ chaining poetic images

$x + \text{night} + y + z = \text{the shirt of the night was torn to Love}$the whole verse established by chaining poetic images.

Let's divide the verse to its sub-units establishing the chaining impact:

The shirt of the night
The shirt of the night was torn
The shirt of the night was torn to
Love

That was poetic image established by noun + noun combination. Also we can create a poetic image by verb + noun combination.

Let's give another example for verb + noun combination. We have two words as "street", a noun word, and "cry", a verb word.

cry.....natural word

$\text{cry} + x = \text{I cried to the street}$poetic image

$\text{cry} + z + x = \text{I cried my desires to the street}$ chaining poetic images

$\text{cry} + y + z + x = \text{I cried my purple desires to the street}$ the whole verse established by chaining poetic images.

About Author

A socialist Laz poet-author from Turkey, Serkan Engin wasborn in 1975 in Izmit, Turkey. He is from "Art of Labour Collective" in Turkey (In Turkish: Emegin Sanati)

His poems appear in more than fifty literary journals in Turkey. In 2004, he published a poem manifesto, entitled Imagist Socialist Poetry. He has been trying to launch a new movement in Turkish poetry and to this end has published numerous articles about literary theory. The basic mottos of them being "Imagist in form, socialist in content" and "If you have no fight, you don't have any poem."